



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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5,500 drug paraphernalia items worth more than \$250,000 seized by ICE

-Latest seizure in ICE's crackdown on South Florida head shops-

MIAMI — Bongs, onyx, metal pipes and other drug paraphernalia were among the 5,500 items seized last week by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents serving several federal search and seizure warrants.

The warrants were served at Smaya Smoke Shop, 1419 Washington Avenue; Bamboo Cigars, 1339 Washington Avenue; Shisha International, 1225 Washington Avenue; Aladdin Gift Shop, 857 Washington Avenue and High Tide Tobacco, 9814 South Dixie Hwy.

Many of the items seized were disguised as everyday items such as highlighters, pagers and women's lipstick.

"These shops sell a dangerous lie about drugs and drug use," said Jesus Torres, special agent-in-charge for ICE in Miami. "It is obvious they want people to think its okay to take drugs. This is simply unacceptable."

This seizure is as a result of Operation up in Smoke, a continuing ICE Miami initiative launched in Dec. 2003 designed to identify and prosecute businesses that illegally import, manufacture, and distribute drug paraphernalia in South Florida.

Since the inception of this initiative, ICE special agents have served approximately 25 federal search warrants, seizing more than 85,000 items of illegal drug paraphernalia worth more than \$2 million.

Additional search and seizure warrants are anticipated as this operation is a top priority for ICE. The sale of drug paraphernalia is a violation of U.S. federal laws under Title 21, United States Code (USC), Section 863.

ICE has information that there are other businesses selling smaller amounts of drug paraphernalia items. They too are in violation of law and may be held accountable for their actions.

These seizures were made with the assistance of the Miami Beach Police Department (MBPD).

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.